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"I have found in Islam a religion that is compelling in its simplicity. My early thoughts of God did not inspire reverence so much as fear; the 'Wrath of God' seemed more real than 'His Mercy.'

"What we think of God moulds our very actions.

"Islam gives me a God worthy of worship and an inspiration to follow."

AMINEH BROWNE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى سُلَّةٍ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

ZU 'L-HIJJA, 1349 A.H.

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THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

It is not a matter for surprise if the pre-Islamic conception of religion should have caused a feeling of revolt among cultured people. They think that our passions of hope and fear have led us to believe in the existence of a Deity. We sometimes find our efforts thwarted, and we fail, from unknown causes, to obtain the object of our pursuit; on the other hand, we make gains on other occasions without any effort on our part. In both cases we fail to discover any apparent cause, and are thus led to believe that our welfare and mishaps come to us through agencies beyond our control. Our ignorance, however, ascribes it all to the anger or pleasure of some Unknown Being, Who eventually becomes the object of our worship. We pray to Him for gain, and entreat Him to save us from loss. Indeed, all this occurs to us in pursuance of certain laws working in Nature. They are unchangeable, and are for ever at work. Our ignorance of or our disobedience to them produces all that happens to us, but we erroneously look to some imaginary Deity as the Creator of such vicissitudes in life. Had we discovered all the laws of Nature and respected them, everything would have gone to our satisfaction, and we should have been saved from the burden of religion.

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It is, however, interesting to note that the conception of religion propounded by Islam is somewhat akin to what has been argued on the above lines by anti-religionists. The Holy Book speaks of such an Unseen Being as Allah, Who neither needs our worship nor obeisance.¹

His worship, according to the Qur-án, consists in our obeying His laws, which are found in Nature. The whole world seems to be in the hand of a Governor Who administers it under a system of set laws. Laws in Nature compelled Science to believe in the existence of the Unseen. It had, however, to pass through several stages of research before that belief dawned upon its votaries. These laws were evolved to serve some preconceived end. They went in their prescribed course to work out a certain specified design which, working, also evinced marvellous intellect and a vast knowledge of the properties of things, as well as of the proportions in which they become combined under various collocations. But the whole affair did demand a strong ruling hand, Who worked with proprietary rights in them to bring out the desired results. These seven things—Law, Monism, Evolution, Design, Intellect, Knowledge, and Proprietary Command—when observed as working conjointly in the world, could not but establish the existence of the Great Almighty.

Science bowed before God. He was the First Intelligent Cause of Spencer, and the Allah of the Qur-án. The Book made up in this respect a great deficiency existing in the old scriptures. How could we think of God if we had no belief in His existence? We were intelligent beings, and assertive theology held no appeal for us. But the Qur-án repeatedly sets before our intelligent observation various phenomena of Nature that compel the human mind to believe in its Creator. The Book teems with logic and reason in this respect, but I would speak of three things that appeal to me chiefly, besides those I have noted elsewhere.

¹ " And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying: Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised " (Qur-án, xxxi. 12).

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(1) The process of creation.¹ Things remain appearing and disappearing; they come to existence, and become destroyed after reaching their perfection²; they go on automatically on their course and find everything already in existence to meet their wants. The whole process proceeds with mathematical precision and mechanical regularity under a most capable and vigilant supervision. How could it take place without some competent engineer to direct it.

(2) There exists a most wonderful relation in everything. All things take attitudes supplementary or complementary towards each other, though they exist in different provinces of Nature. For example, all that descends from the sky in the form of light, heat, etc., would be of no avail if the Earth had not the power of receptivity. She receives them and becomes conceived of innumerable things which she has brought forth gradually to our use. Activity and passivity are always at work everywhere, and relation between things located so distantly from each other could not be a matter of accident.

(3) Man is admittedly a worshipping animal. We crave

¹ "Read in the name of your Lord who created." "He created man from a clot." "Read and your Lord is Most Honourable." "Who taught (to write) with the pen." "Taught man what he knew not" (Qur-ān, xcvi. 1-5).

"Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High," "Who creates, then makes complete," "And who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal)" (Ibid., lxxxvii. 1-3).

"He, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Who did not take to Himself a son, and Who has no associate in the kingdom, and Who created every thing, then ordained for it a measure" (Ibid., xxv. 2).

"Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created every thing, and He is the Knower of all things!" (Ibid., vi. 102).

"Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth, and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, so there it is" (Ibid., ii. 117).

² "Who created the seven heavens alike; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder?" "Then turn back the eye again and again; your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued" (Ibid., lxvii. 3-4).

"Every one on it must pass away." "And there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour" (Ibid., lv. 26-27).

"And call not with Allah any other god; there is no god but He; every thing is perishable but He; His is the judgment, and to Him you shall be brought back" (Ibid., xxviii. 88).

for an object of adoration: we may bow down before a stone, or prostrate ourselves before the Unseen, but we all respond to a life tendency. Buddhists, with their atheistic bent of mind, pay the same homage to Buddha's images as we do to God. Even an atheist worships Law. If the God of Culture is the God of Law, and we on the other hand cannot avail ourselves of anything without obeying it—nay, we cannot live for a moment without our allegiance to Law—how can we dispense with a creed or code of life that preaches to us the very religion of Nature, the religion of “commandment and obedience.” The Qur-án speaks of the generation of prophets. They appeared from time to time, and brought messages from the Lord to their people. Each and all of them repeatedly enjoined upon mankind one message¹—to obey Allah, and to worship Rabb—the Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer, and Evolver of the Universe.

The same message has been given to us in the Qur-án. It does not demand from us that we place effigies and images of Allah and Rabb in our shrines and bow down before them, that would be mere mockery. The Muslims no doubt do bow down and prostrate themselves before the Unseen, but that is merely the sign of their willingness to bow down to His Will, the Law of the Atheist. Allah, as the Qur-án says, is the Source of all laws in general, while Rabb frames such laws as are observed by Nature in the creation and maintenance of things, from the first stage up to their perfection. Religion, in its true shape, comes to support some of the said laws, it goads us to their observance. Islam, then, is the creed of the so-called anti-religionist. It is not in our eating and drinking and performance of nuptial rites that all our duties and obligations become exhausted. Animals do the same. We have various faculties in us to be developed, and true civilization lies in their fruition. Some of them develop here, but others remain in abeyance. There must be some life after death to bring all our faculties to perfection. Every one of the blessed race that claimed to have brought the Divine Message to the human race preached of the hereafter, and

¹ Cf. The Qur-án, vii, sections 9-12.

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we find the following characteristics in the lives of all of them:

(1) They speak favourably, and forcibly too, as to the truth of their message—history bears witness to these things.

(2) They all appeared at a time when their people had become demoralized and led a luxurious life that paved the way to destruction.

(3) They held a good social standing, and led a decent life of purity before they spoke of the religion which they preached, and came suddenly to it as though in response to a call.

(4) They did not make a trade of their teaching; they did not ask any remuneration for it. They lost even what they had before—the position as well as occupation of life.

(5) They were successful in the end, to the total discomfiture and even destruction of their adversaries.

(6) They were neither a class of soothsayers nor teachers of dogmatic principles. They spoke in plain language, and their teaching had a direct bearing upon human life. They came with reason and logic, and emphasized a course of life conducive to good here and in the hereafter.

I find the same in the Qur-án. Muhammad never thought of his personal aggrandisement. The entire Book speaks of logic and reason.¹ It does not tell always of transcendental things, but often preaches simple morality and ethics, which, though most necessary, people do not always care to practise. The West is rolling in wealth, but it is lacking in the things that make for permanency. I will quote some simple lessons from the Qur-án; they do not speak of unknown things, but their practice has now, to a great extent, ceased.

Sons in opulence go side by side with the parent in indigence. We often lack things we know not, and it causes trouble. Fornication is the chief curse; the Qur-án not only forbids it, but warns us against our doing such things as may tend to that evil, though they may be the vogue in Society. The Book demands from us, not that we shun this evil only, but that we do not go near it. We do not, doubtless, commit

¹ "O people! surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light" (Qur-án, iv. 175).

infanticide, but we create the same results in the form of birth-control, to prevent which crime the Qur-án was the first to raise its voice. In short, we do any wrong that is likely to avoid detection, but if we believe in some coming Day of Judgment we must needs cut a different figure.

The whole question turns on the existence of the future life. It is, of course, an intricate problem, but the observation of things around us and the long evolutionary journey which the etherial world has had to travel up to the stage of human consciousness, under the wise guidance of the Originator and Designer, clearly show that the human frame, in its material form, cannot be the final stage of that journey. The Qur-án speaks of it in a most illuminating way, carrying us to the very commencement of the universe. It speaks of the first formation of the heavens and the earth within the seven periods¹ of gradation. Space was then full of vapours² and gases, when another gaseous matter, hot like fire,³ that floated in space assumed the form of the earth in its nascent condition.

The heaven and the earth were at that time a closed thing, with various matters in them in a confused and mixed condition. The water then came to open that which was closed. It also brought life on the earth.⁴ The earth, as the Book says, was full of quaking in the beginning. The mountains and rocks were created to make it steady. The spaces of the earth had wide ways to enable its future denizens to follow the right course.⁵ The space above was similarly decorated with

¹ "He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things" (Qur-án, ii. 29).

"And certainly We made above you seven ways; and never are We heedless of creation" (Ibid., xxiii. 17).

"And We made above you seven strong ones" (Ibid., lxxviii. 12).

² "Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour" (Ibid., xli. 11).

³ "And the jinn We created before of intensely hot fire" (Ibid., xv. 27).

⁴ "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them; and We have made of water every thing living; will they not then believe?" (Ibid., xxi. 30).

⁵ "And We have made great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with them, and We have made in it wide ways that they may follow a right direction" (Ibid., xxi. 31).

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shining lamps to guide them in the darkness.¹ The water came from the clouds in a measure² sufficient to move the dead matter.³ It settled down in the earth and brought forth verdure and vegetation.⁴ It made gardens of fruits⁵ and flowers, with varieties of grain to serve for our subsistence.⁶ It was for this purpose that days and nights were made with alternations in them which moved the winds and brought forth clouds.⁷ The winds also floated ships and boats that⁷ enriched us with the treasures of the sea. If the days are for

¹ "And We made a shining lamp" (Qur-ān, lxxviii. 13).

"And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven and We have made it fairseeming to the beholders" (Ibid., xv. 16).

² "And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away" (Ibid., xxiii. 18).

³ "And you see the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage" (Ibid., xxii. 5).

⁴ (Ibid., xxii. 5).

⁵ "Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat" (Ibid., xxiii. 19).

"Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you" (Ibid., xiv. 32).

"That We may bring forth thereby corn and herbs" (Ibid., lxxviii. 15).

⁶ "Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a structure, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud, then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know" (Ibid., ii. 22).

⁷ "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and the night, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand" (Ibid., ii. 164).

"And (in) the variation of the night and the day, and (in) what Allah sends down of sustenance from the cloud, then gives life thereby to the earth after its death, and (in) the changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand" (Ibid., xlv. 5).

"Allah is He who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks" (Ibid., xlv. 12).

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enabling us to engage in various occupations in life,¹ the nights are made for our rest¹ and to refresh us for the coming day. The Book also refers to our own creation, and tells how the various products of the Earth became combined under various specializations to evolve the genital seed as her essence.² It became located in woman's womb, where it passed through other seven stages of evolution,³ and gave rise to a new creation—our consciousness.³ Moreover, the Earth brought forth various cattle for our use and sustenance,⁴ and the Book speaks emphatically also of the subservience of the whole of the universe⁵ to our needs, and of various other gifts to

¹ "And We made the night to be a covering." "And We made the day for seeking livelihood" (Qur-án, lxxviii. 10-11).

² "And certainly We created man of an extract of clay" (Ibid., xxiii. 12).

³ "Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place." "Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators" (Qur-án, xxiii. 13-14).

⁴ "Allah is He who made the cattle for you that you may ride on some of them, and some of them you eat." "And there are advantages for you in them, and that you may attain thereon a want which is in your breasts, and upon them and upon the ships you are borne" (Ibid., xl. 79-80).

"And in your (own) creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure" (Ibid., xlv. 4).

⁵ "Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you." "And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day" (Ibid., xiv. 32-33).

"He it is who sends down water from the cloud for you; it gives drink, and by it (grow) the trees upon which you pasture." "He causes to grow for you thereby herbage, and the olives, and the palm-trees, and the grapes, and of all the fruits; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect." "And He has made subservient for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder;" "And what He has created in the earth of varied hues; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful." "And He it is who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may

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us, numberless and beyond imagination.¹ In short, whatever we may need has already been produced. The Designer of the whole scheme, which took Him millions of years to accomplish, must have some true purpose before Him.² It could not have been all in vain.³ It was all made as though for the purpose of receiving and accommodating some person of dignity.⁴ This person was no other than man himself—God's own vicegerent.⁵ The Book came to raise him, and exalt him to that state of honour.⁶ If we had to live on the earth only for sixty or seventy years and then cease utterly to be, would it not then have been mere sport on the part of God 7 our Lord? Was this much ado in vain? ⁸ It must be purposeful as every other thing in His creation shows, which purpose could not be materialized unless there be continuity of our life, when we shall make further progress in the realms beyond the grave. The Qur-án speaks repeatedly of the life after death.

give thanks." "And He has cast great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with you, and rivers and roads that you may go aright," "And landmarks; and by the stars they find the right way." "Is He then Who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind?" "And if you would count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur-án, xvi. section 2).

¹ "And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful" (Ibid., xiv. 34).

² "Most surely in the heavens and the earth there are signs for the believers" (Ibid., xlv. 3).

³ "He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)" (Ibid., xvi. 3).

"And we did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport" (Ibid., xxi. 16, xlv. 38).

⁴ "And surely We have dignified the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We have given them of the good things, and We have made them to excel, by a (high) degree of excellence, most of those whom We have created" (Ibid., xvii. 70).

⁵ "And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it), they said: What! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know" (Ibid., ii. 30).

⁶ "And exalted for you your eminence" (Ibid., xciv. 4).

⁷ "And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport" (Ibid., xxi. 16, xlv. 38).

⁸ "He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, highly exalted be He above what they associate (with Him)" (Ibid., xvi. 3).

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It makes it an article of faith for us. The Book also makes mention of the various grades¹ of evolution through which we have to pass, and these grades have been styled by it "the seven heavens." Had we been labouring under the old mode of thinking, like an atheist, taking the creation of the universe and its components as a matter of accident, we could say (as the Qur-án quotes the unbelievers as saying) that there is nothing but our life in this, we live and die, and nothing destroys us but time and accident. But Science has now revolutionized our convictions; we look at everything from a different angle; we see design everywhere, and every substance is ruled by unchangeable laws; we look to man as a "mighty atom" on the earth. His creation seems to us to have been designed from the very commencement of the nebular world which is still developing into the organized kingdom²; nay, numerous other things came into existence even before the nebular world, to work out the said Design. Was it all a matter of sport if we had only to live for a brief space of time and then to disappear for ever? That is to give the lie to the Creator of the Universe, and to find fault with Nature that seems so perfect and free from all flaw.³ Then, how about the various products of the earth, say in the form of fruits, flowers, and cattle, that exist for our exclusive use? They took thousands of years before they were ready for us to use; was it all only for a creation that came but to eat, drink, and be merry, and that again for such a little while when compared with the age of the universe? It would be an insult to our intelligence if we were so to believe. There must be a great future before us, and this short life of ours has been given to us as a period of preparation before we enter into the vast realm of wonderful possibilities and probabilities. How gracious of God, the Most Merciful Lord, to shorten our stay here and hasten our entering into eternal bliss.

¹ "That you shall most certainly enter one state after another" (Qur-án, lxxxiv. 19).

² "And certainly We made above you seven ways; and never are We heedless of creation" (Ibid., xxiii. 17).

³ "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise" (Ibid., lxii. 1).

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I should recommend my readers to read in this connection the first section of chapter lxxviii, as well as lxxx. 24-42, xxxii. 12-16, lxxvi. 5-7, and xxii. 5.

The present, in every sphere, is admittedly the mother of the future. The welfare or the trouble of the coming days must depend upon our present actions. We are in another embryonic condition here, and have to be born in other regions beyond the grave. If good conditions of a womb-life bring forth a healthy child, we are again in a new womb for the hereafter. If all the faculties inherent in all other things cannot remain without coming to the surface, and they change their conditions and environments to achieve that end, our case also must be the same. Those of our faculties that do remain latent here in this life must have some future life and new environment for their growth, otherwise the whole scheme of creation, as far as we are concerned, is missed. Consciousness exists in the vegetable kingdom, but it comes into prominence when transferred to the human body. So will be the growth of our various occult powers in the coming world.

If the Lord of Nature has given a code of life to all things in Nature for their thriving in the form of their respective instincts, and the said code acts for them as their religion, the Qur-ān brings us that religion for our guidance, as we do not find any instinct of knowledge in us. We have a capability to acquire knowledge, but we do not bring it from the womb; we cannot distinguish between the beneficial and the baneful by instinct as the rest of Nature does, we have to learn the required knowledge. The world was not without its revelations from God for this purpose at the advent of the Prophet, but these had lost their original purity at that time. The Qur-ān therefore came to confirm knowledge already received, but it differed from the other scriptures in spirit and in form. It was neither a treatise on ritualism, like the Rig Veda, the Hindu Sacred Book, nor was it a tribal record, like the Bible. It spoke of ceremonial piety, and declared it only a means¹ to attain higher ends. It narrated

¹ "O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil) " (Qur-ān, ii. 183).

(Footnote continued bottom of p. 156)

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certain historical events, but only to illustrate some of the principles it inculcated.

The Book came to help us in bringing our faculties to perfection. It came to make us the ideal man. It did not come to teach us to exalt the Deity by repeating words in praise of Him. He stands beyond all human praises,¹ but it was sent, at its revelation, to elevate a humanity which bordered on animality. The Word of God came to raise that humanity nearer to the Divine. Islam was not preached to exact from us any adoration for God in the current sense of the word, but it taught us that His Adoration is to remind us of that ideal state of life that befits us as His lieutenants on earth. Our attention is not drawn to His grandeur and beauty because they are His, but we are told of them in order to possess them ourselves.

In His different attributes, as stated in the Qur-án, we are given an insight into that Divine Resplendence that should also halo us. No doubt we have to keep Him always before us, but in glorifying Him we have also to think of the ideal of man in us. Our glorification of the Lord must consist in our

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do" (Qur-án, xxix. 45).

"There is no blame on you for seeking bounty from your Lord, so when you hasten on from 'Arafât, then remember Allah near the holy monument, and remember Him as He has guided you, though before that you were certainly of the erring ones" (Ibid., ii. 198).

"That they may witness advantages for them and mention the name of Allah during stated days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds, then eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy" (Ibid., xxii. 28).

"Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer: an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is Knowing, Wise" (Ibid., ix. 60).

"Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing" (Ibid., ix. 103).

¹ "And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying: Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised" (Ibid., xxxi. 12).

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edification to Divine Glory. The Qur-án declares this to be the objective of ¹ religion it teaches, while it calls it Islam ² in its subjective form. Islam means our following such laws as would help us to cultivate our faculties so that they attain their best growth. For this reason the Book makes mention of the Hundred Names of God. These attributes refer to His ways of work in Nature, and have been revealed to us that we may make them our prototype. I have dealt with them in the February number of the *Islamic Review*.

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By KHWAJA NIZĀMU D-DIN HASAN

"And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance."—
HOLY QUR-ÁN, vi. 109.

I

ISLAM AND THE EAST

"No religion has been calumniated more than Islam," observed Reland (*d.* 1718) long ago; and it is as true to-day as on the day it was made. Indeed, of all the religions of the world, Islam has been much criticized and misunderstood by the followers of other religions. Although the impulse it gave to the intellectual development of the human race is partly

¹ "And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did) Jacob: O my sons! surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims" (Qur-án, ii. 132).

² "Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion; but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful?" (Ibid., v. 3).

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recognized, yet its great work in the uplifting of humanity is totally ignored. Its *rationale*, its ideals, and its aspirations are not properly understood. It is subjected, on the other hand, to the severe ordeal of prejudiced criticism, both in the East and the West. Things are attributed to Islam which we Muslims never find in our sacred literature, and vilifying stories are fabricated by the prolific brains of its antagonists to prove some false contention. Writer after writer has stood up to remark that Islam is less interesting than other religions in as much as it is less original; to confuse the decadence of the Muslims with that of their creed; and to judge Islam exclusively by the life of its professors and often of its most unworthy ones.

I do not propose here to examine each and every calumny levelled at Islam. Nor do I claim to be the first in exposing the hollowness of these indictments. Earnest attempts of men like Ameer 'Alī and Khwaja Kamalu-d-Dīn will always shine as grand masterpieces of historical effort to lift the veil of misconception about Islam and Muhammad (May the Peace of Allah be on him!). The following lines are only an attempt to dispel the mist of ignorance that hangs over the true ideals of Islam and to trace how far the Muslims themselves are responsible for the adverse attitude of non-Muslims towards Islam.

RISE OF AUTOCRACY AND DECLINE OF RELIGIOUS ZEAL IN MUSLIMS

The history of foreign resentment against Islam is a fairly long one and can be traced even to the days of its advent. In some cases, blame for this hostility can be laid at the door of Muslims and in others at that of the prejudiced followers of other religions.

It is with grief that one turns over the first few pages of Islamic history; for Islam, the religion of humanity and universal brotherhood, became divided at an early stage into various schisms due to the greed and revolutionary instincts of its unworthy followers. The spirit of the Master which had established the harmony between the Divine Essence and

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the soul of man was forgotten, and the hair-splitting theology that evolved out of the internecine dynastic rivalries and schismatic strifes made an inglorious aspect of the religion which was not meant for a country or a race but for the whole world.

The stern devotion of the early Caliphs to the well-being of the people, and the austere simplicity of their lives, which were in strict accordance with the example of the Holy Prophet, ended with the martyrdom of 'Alī. "With him perished the truest-hearted and best Moslem of whom Mohammedan history has preserved the remembrance."¹ And with him "thus vanished the popular régime which had for its basis a patriarchal simplicity never again to appear among any Mussulman nation; only the jurisprudence and the rule which depended on the Koran survived the fall of the elective Government. Some of the republican passion, however, which gave to the small States a certain grandeur, and to the grand an excess of force, maintained itself in the nation in spite of the armies of the usurpers."²

With the establishment of an autocracy under Mu'āwiyah, the political spirit of Islam underwent a great change. The "Imperialism" set up by the Omayyads and strengthened later by the Abbassides under Persian influence, as against the democratic spirit of Islam, was another reason for the blame of fanaticism having been imputed to the fair name of Islam. It would not thus be wrong to say that the worst enemies of Islam have been its own bloodthirsty and vindictive tyrants. Under the dictatorial haughtiness and the ruthless ferocity of their vandalic successors—the primitive Turks, Tartars, Mongols, Persians, and other pagan races of Central Asia—the conciliatory principles inculcated by the Great Prophet were pushed aside before the promulgation of war and arrogant imperialism without the sense of a moral but instilled with precepts of worldly wisdom such as Polonius bequeathed to Laertes.

Professor Habīb, in his book *Mahmūd of Ghaznān*

¹ Major Osborn.

² Oelsner: *Des Effets de la Religion de Mahomet*, quoted by Ameer 'Alī in his *Spirit of Islam*.

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(pp. 2 and 3), observes that "this weakening of spiritual zeal has shown itself in all religions at various stages, and is painfully obvious in the history of Islam, from the decline of the Abbaside Caliphate in the ninth century to the Mongol conquest of Muslim Asia and the growth of mysticism in the thirteenth. It was a period of great achievements in science, literature, and art, and the area of human knowledge was enlarged by scholars trained in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It was a period of feverish political activity; empires were established and pulled down; cities were founded and destroyed. *But it was a period of refinement and culture, of an alluring materialistic civilization—not of faith.*¹ The missionary zeal of the earlier Muslims had evaporated in the signal success it had achieved, and the religion that had come into the world for the elevation of the lower classes was being used as a bulwark for the protection of vested interests and the continuation of time-honoured abuses. Of a hair-splitting theology there was enough and to spare; and the sectarian fanaticism which such theology excited discolours the annals of many generations, during which 'orthodox' and 'heretic' persecuted and tortured each other with an inhumanity they never displayed in their dealings with the non-Muslims, who were regarded as the honourable opponents in an honourable war. Islam had become a matter of custom and tradition and a means for procuring the salvation of the individual soul. It was no longer a world-wide force of democratic upheaval. People prayed and fasted and read the Qur-án with devotion; they lived according to what they considered to be the true interpretation of the law; but the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, such as had inspired the Saracenic invaders of Persia, was totally beyond their ken. They had lost their proselytizing fervour and were content to keep their creed to themselves. The boundaries of the Muslim world remained where the Omayyad Caliphs had left them, and no new countries or peoples were brought within the fold. And internally also the political, religious, and racial unity of the Muslim world was being gradually undermined by forces of disintegration."

¹ Italics are mine.

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“ Had the followers of Mohammed marched on the lines of the Master and adopted the character of the early Caliphs,” observes a writer, “ their empire would have been still more vast and more durable than that of the Romans.” They, however, did not.

But though the Republic fell, and the religious sceptre passed from the hands of the Saracens, the Faith lived. Within a short period of its appearance, Islam spread from East to West, due to the vital force of its ethical and moral excellence.¹ “ It was the outcome of ages of evolution. It represented the latest phase in religious development of man; it did not depend for its existence or its growth on the life of empires or men. And as it spread and fructified, each race and each age profited by its teachings according to their own spiritual necessities and intellectual comprehension! ”²

The general effect of Islam on Asia, steeped in religious chaos, was that of a system of positive moral rules, based on a true conception of human progress, for the establishment of certain principles and dispositions, and the cultivation of a certain temper of mind which the conscience is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of time and place. Perhaps the theurgic and monotheistic nature of the Eastern mind found in the simple tenets of Islam a religion free from sacerdotalism, dogma, and superstition, yet one essentially adapted to the spiritual cravings of their hearts on account of its superior moral and ethics. The new adherents in the East, in course of time, however, contorted and twisted Islam to fit in their own narrow beliefs of superstition and ritual. Islam thus became a matter of mere custom and tradition, whose formularies were alone regarded, if at all, with a dull and torpid assent. The native element was freely mixed with the original religion, and the schismatic splitting up, which once started could not be stopped, went on with vigour more than ever.

¹ H. G. Wells, in his *Salvaging of Civilization* (pp. 78-79), says: “ Still more remarkable was the swift transformation in less than a century of all the nations and people to the south and west of the Mediterranean, from Spain to Central Asia, into the Unity of Islam, a unity which has lasted to this day.”

² Syed Ameer 'Ali: *The Spirit of Islam* (1922), p. 292.

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The change was, of course, unconscious and, therefore, more vital.

Add to these forces of disintegration the eruption of the Mongols and their barbarous campaigns that put an end for a time to the intellectual development of Asia.

For a moment "Islam seemed lost: pressed on the one hand by the Crusaders filled with religious fervour; and on the other by the wild, plundering, and ever-advancing cavalry of the Moguls. But Islam did not perish. In Syria it steadily supplanted the Franks; and in Persia, where a powerful Mogul dynasty had established a vast empire under the name of Il-Khan, the religion of the Prophet won a dazzling victory when Ghazan, the seventh ruler, accepted Islam and entered into friendly relations with the rest of the Muslim princes. *Not by arms but by religious ideas did Islam vanquish the Northern Conquerors.* There must indeed be some tremendous power in these Semitic religions which enables them not only to weather world-shattering storms but to emerge out of them firmer, stronger, and more vigorous than ever. In the war with the Franks, extending over more than a century, Islam passed through a tempering process. The rift that had opened, closed in fire and blood. Islam shook off its lethargy and gathered fresh strength. The Arab nation, which has long ceased to champion the religious ideas that had arisen and grown into maturity in their midst, now retired into the background, handing over the torch to a nation ruder but more powerful, whose empire soon embraced the entire Orient and whose political power the old Caliphate never attained or equalled."¹

PERSIA

Of all the Asiatic countries, the first to be Islamized completely was Persia. The polytheistic cult of Zoroaster had decayed there, like all primitive cults, leaving the country in a state of social and moral degradation. "Every trace of religious life was extinct among the people; the masses were ground down by the worst of all evils, a degenerate priesthood

¹ Von Kremer: *Herrschende Ideen des Islams*. Italics are mine.

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and a licentious oligarchy. The Mazdakian and Manichæan heresies had loosened every rivet in the social fabric. The consequence was, that as soon as the Moslems entered the country as the precursors of law and order, a general conversion took place, and Persia became for ever attached to Islam." ¹ The orthodox and the conservative few who remained adhered to their old creed were only too glad to take advantage of the Islamic spirit of toleration, and saw no reason in opposing its Divine Code from ameliorating Persia. They, too, on their part were affected with their close touch with Islam, and even clandestinely accepted and adapted some of its ideas to their religion, which has henceforward been saved from steadily declining.

AFGHANISTAN, CHINA, AND CENTRAL ASIA

The history of the conquest of Afghanistan is closely bound up with that of Persia and India, being, on account of its geographical position, the medium of communication between the two countries. China was the next country which was largely Islamized, and even now the Muslim population, strictly estimated by Mr. Marshall Broomhall in his monograph on *Chinese Islam* (1910), seems to lie somewhere between five and ten millions, and he himself leans towards the higher rather than the lower figure. The traditions current in China about the introduction of Islam into this vast country are as fabulous as anything to be found in hagiologies, and Mr. Broomhall exposes some of the fictions which his predecessors had accepted as historical. In China, too, the introduction of Islam was followed by peaceful conversion; ² and the assimilation of the native element in the original religion can be easily detected.

In other countries of Central Asia, wherever Islam made its way, the same process of conversion and assimilation followed. Its approach to India alone needs a separate tale.

¹ *Spirit of Islam*, pp. 217-218.

² Thiersant: *Le Mahometism en China et Dans le Turkistan Oriente*, vol. ii (Paris).

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Islam found in India a very congenial place for settling down but not for extending, partly because of some of the Muslim invaders who carried fire and sword into the country and did not really care to convert the unbelievers to the Eternal Religion. The destruction and havoc they wrought, and the *a posteriori* justification they twisted out of Islam for what they had done, was more serious in consequences to themselves rather than to their vanquished.

"... Islam sanctioned neither the vandalism nor the plundering motives of the invaders; no principle known to the Shari'at justified the uncalled-for attack on Hindu princes who had done Mahmūd and his subjects no harm; the shameless destruction of places of worship is condemned by the law of every creed. And yet Islam, though it was not an inspiring motive, could be utilized as an *a posteriori* justification for what had been done."¹

"Hindus believe," says Alberuni, "that there is no country like theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited, and stolid. According to their belief there is no country on earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholars in Khorasan and Persia, they will think you both an ignoramus and a liar. People with this insularity of outlook were not likely to lend their ears to a new message. But the policy of some solitary characters in history as that of Mahmūd secured the rejection of Islam without a hearing.

"A religion is naturally judged by the character of those who believe in it; their faults and their virtues are supposed to be the effect of their creed. It was inevitable that the Hindus should consider Islam a deviation from truth when its followers deviated so deplorably from the path of rectitude and justice. A people is not conciliated by being robbed of all

¹ Professor Mohammad Habib: *Mahmūd of Ghaznīn*.

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it holds most dear, nor will it love a faith that comes to it in the guise of plundering armies and leaves devastated fields and ruined cities as monuments of its victorious method for reforming the morals of a prosperous but erratic world. 'They came, burnt, killed, plundered, captured—and went away' was a Persian's description of the Mongol invasion of his country; it would not be an inappropriate summary of Mahmūd's achievement on Hindustan. It was not thus that the Prophet had preached Islam in Arabia; and no one need be surprised that the career of the conquering Ghaznavide created a burning hatred for the new faith in the Hindu mind and blocked its progress more effectually than armies and forts. Mahmūd," says the observant Alberuni, "utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate hatred of all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hand cannot yet reach—to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment, both from political and religious causes."

But, even so, the intrinsically mastering and attractive spirit of Islam, visible even through the dense backsliding of its followers, gathered a number of enthusiastic adherents under its banner. The mysticism of the Muslim Sufis fascinated the no less mystic minds of the Hindu philosophers to whom the Puranic and the Tantric cults had become stale; and "Moslem theology, philosophy, and science put forth their first luxuriant shoots on a soil that was saturated with Hellenistic culture."

Thus, although the Asiatics in general are not justifiable in their anti-Islamic propaganda, yet it must be said in fairness to them that they are not to be blamed in so far as they have not received any true explanation of the tenets of Islam through the actions of its followers. The Muslim Emperors

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who ruled over India for nearly nine centuries did not carry on any propaganda, impressive or peaceful, for the establishment of their religion. It was only left to a less powerful and less popular minority of learned men and theologians to carry on passive proselytism. Under conditions like this it was quite natural for the people to remain ignorant of and indifferent towards a religion of which they knew nothing from true sources, and of which they had formed a distorted idea by the silly teachings of the scandalmongers of whom there is no minority in every religion. Small wonder, then, that they misjudged and misunderstood Islam, and in the interest of moral and social justice it is therefore essential to lift the veil of misapprehension that has been hung over the pristine face of Islam by its prejudiced antagonists.

(To be continued)

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN— IN CHURCHIANITY

By F. L. C.

IN the March-April number of the *Islamic Review* I wrote that I purposed later to say how I found Light and Truth. This discovery, as already hinted, was to me, in the light of all that had gone before—the striving, the continual following of the injunction “Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you”—little short of the miraculous. It was not the actual finding but the manner of it in such a totally unexpected direction that is so amazing.

It is necessary to digress in the interest of sequence and a connected story.

Born in India (where my father was in the Civil Service), of British parentage, for twenty-one years I had had the very great fortune to travel the entire length and breadth of the country. As a matter of fact, I did little else but travel and

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seemed never to be in one place more than a few weeks at a time. Obviously these journeys brought me into contact with all sorts and conditions of men, from the "Lordly Brahmin" to the "Untouchable," each poles apart on the social sphere, and men of various races, religions, and tongues. Equally obviously these journeys and contacts give one a very great measure of confidence when writing on a subject like India and its peoples. At least one can claim to write from first-hand knowledge.

When in the Madras Presidency, where I spent the greater part of my stay in India, I was privileged—the word is used advisedly—to pay periodical visits to a number of villages, where I was always assured of a hearty and very warm welcome by the villagers, whose hospitality knew no bounds, the length of my visits being limited only by my inclination or by expediency. Often I stayed for weeks at a time and was free to roam the *topes* (orchards) and to help myself to the fruits which grew there in such prodigal profusion. Being able to speak the languages with fluency made my visits not only possible but all the more enjoyable and interesting, and enabled me to get at the back of the minds of these very primitive friends of mine, for such they were in very truth. The simplicity, guilelessness, tact, faith, and loveliness of their character made me in turn love them, and at this remote distance of time I have only to cast my mind back to live with them again in the spirit. I used the word "primitive," for so they were by virtue of being children of Nature and untouched by the "civilizing" influence of the *sahib*. We were hundreds of miles from "nowhere."

When eventually I moved to the Punjab, visiting the places the names of which are writ large, alas tragically, in our history—Delhi, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Lahore among others—to Rawal Pindi, I was not so fortunately placed in the matter of languages and in this respect seemed to be in a world where the manners and customs were so entirely different to those to which I was accustomed. I was a stripling of fifteen when I left the parental roof to seek my fortune, and made for Pindi via Calcutta, the journey by ship and rail

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taking eight or nine days. Not once during that journey, which brought me into touch with peoples whose languages were utterly foreign to me, did I have cause to complain of a single act of discourtesy or tactlessness. On the contrary, I am still grateful, very grateful, for many little acts of kindness offered without thought of return or even a "thank you."

Vividly do I remember how, when a party of a Punjab cavalry regiment entrained at Saharanpur, those in my compartment took me completely under their collective wing and were positively embarrassing in their anxiety to make perfectly sure I was comfortable and that their impedimenta in no wise interfered with my freedom. All this I understood by the language of pantomime—if the word be permitted. What men! Magnificent stalwart six-footers every one of them; friendly, boisterous, big boys with promise of never growing up. When I arrived at my destination the troops were scattered to every point of the compass, for cholera terror was decimating the population and was the worst outbreak within living memory in that part of the country. The toll in lives was frightful.

Within six months I found myself in Bombay, and again later changed the Purgatory of Aden for the Paradise of England.

Here in very deed I was in a new world. England, from the time I first lisped, was always, and ever always, my Mecca. I joined the Army to reach England, since two earlier attempts to do so by running away to sea were frustrated—ruthlessly, I thought at the time. It would be senseless to attempt even the analysis of my thoughts and feelings when for the first time I saw England from the deck of the troopship one Sunday morning and heard the church-bells which I took to be a joyous welcome to myself. It was a rapid succession of delirious thrills and I did not even think of Aden.

To return to the original intention of this article—how I found Light and Truth.

That Christianity as taught by the Church is founded on paganism I long suspected because it agrees in fundamentals with various cults, Mithraism for example. The Virgin Birth,

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the Atonement, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, taking a few of the doctrines at random, have their counterparts in these cults. The Christian "priest" I could never accept because he is, *de facto*, a contradiction in terms. I could never understand why God should require a sacrifice to atone for the sins of countless millions notwithstanding the argument of the Old Testament types, prophecies, and promises which are frequently, if not invariably, advanced as the reason that this must be so. I argue that if atonement is offered and accepted, then all for whom this has been made are free to "eat, drink, and be merry," and if their sins—to use a figure of speech beloved of the Nonconformity—are "nailed to the Cross," and if once the debt has been paid, further demands would be unjust and impossible and could never be required. Neither could I accept for a number of reasons the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity.

One has merely to keep oneself informed of Church happenings—Anglican, Roman Catholic, or any other branch—to realize to what a deplorable pass the priesthood has brought them. Bickerings, arguings, jealousies, illegalities, inconsistencies, rivalries, divisions, the frequent introductions of more and yet more inanities, the senseless soul-destroying ceremonial and formalism considered to be essential for the acceptance by God of prayer, the blasphemous doctrines of Transubstantiation and Reservation which have found a firm footing in what was once a Protestant Church, the odium cast upon those who remain faithful to their Protestantism by that branch of the Church of England—the self-styled Anglo-Catholic—are all very nauseous.

One has only to read of the recent visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Palestine, and the hysterical protest by that plutocracy at the Vatican, and its reply by way of calling a proposed Council of Cardinals on Mt. Carmel (the shades of Elijah and the prophets of Baal), to appreciate fully how what St. Paul described as "the Gospel of Christ" is trodden in the filth and mire of sacerdotal partisanship.

One eventful Sunday afternoon about twelve months ago, having nothing else to do, I took my family sightseeing. We

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had only just then moved to this part of the country. One of the "sights" was the Mosque at Woking. A Muslim gentleman there, who I later came to know and esteem, if he will allow me to say, as "the Doctor Sahib" ¹ (he is now on his return journey to India and my wish is that he may have a pleasant journey and a safe arrival), with that characteristic innate courtesy and charm showed us the interior of the Mosque and answered a host of questions. He invited us to the usual afternoon lecture conducted by the Imām. We accepted, not from idle curiosity nor in search of novelty or adventure, but to hear what Islam through its mouthpiece in Woking had to say.

The text was, of course, from the Qur-án, read first in the language in which it is written and then translated. Were I asked at the conclusion to suggest a parallel text it would have been, "The Universality of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." Here is no priesthood, admittedly my *bête noir*, no tribal Deity, no Original Sin, no Saviour, no purgatorial torments. In short, after several visits and much questioning it was borne in upon me that practically all my life I have been a Muslim and did not know it. Passing strange that, having lived for a quarter of a century in a country of seventy million Muslims, their country, I should come to my own land and accidentally drop from the skies, as it were, into a very small community of the members of Islam to make the discovery that I am of their faith. What impresses me profoundly about Islam is that it is a faith erected upon the solid adamantine foundation of the Unity of God, the One Who has no Son in the Christian sense, the Great Architect, the Mighty Intelligence, the First Great Cause, the One Who is Spirit and Who must be worshipped in spirit and truth ("for such the Father seeketh to worship Him," said Jesus). Against these mighty truths priestcraft is chicanery, more, an affront to God's Majesty. There is finality about Islam that satisfies every spiritual need which Christianity lacks so woefully.

I always maintained an open mind about the After-Life

¹ Dr. Sh. 'Atāu 'l-Lāh, M.B.B.S., D.Ph., D.T.M.—Ed. I.R.

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philosophy with a tincture—just that—of scepticism. Much was done during my Sunday School days by wrong teaching to make me lock, bolt, and bar the door against acceptance of this doctrine. Certain passages in the Bible which seemed to be most favoured by my teachers as most likely to make the desired impression on my young mind and keep me to the straight and narrow path filled me with horror and great distress. Two of them are, "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" and "There will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." The prospect of an eternity of this, which I cogitated upon more than was good for me at that tender age, resulted in nightmare (fact) and a thorough detestation of Sunday School. An eternity of unutterable suffering day and night, night and day, for ever and ever and ever and ever, with no chance even of a drop of water to cool the tip of one's tongue! I once put this question to my teacher and was told emphatically and dogmatically, "No! Certainly not. Have you forgotten what our Lord said in the parable of Lazarus and Dives?" "But," I protested, "that was only a parable." "Only a parable forsooth. What is a parable, then, my boy?" "A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." "Well then, you have answered your question."

The doctrine of the After-Life as taught by Islam came to me as did a drink of water when I was nearly mad with thirst once during my soldiering days. There is nothing of the purgatorial fires, everlasting damnation, fire and brimstone, physical torment of the Church, but just the operation of certain natural laws. Yes; I accept unequivocally the doctrine of the After-Life as taught by Islam. This doctrine as taught by the Church is illogical and so diametrically and irreconcilably opposed to that other which is the centre and circumference of Christianity-Atonement.

That Jesus is loved and revered as a prophet of God as all Prophets are loved and revered in Islam came as the Balm of Gilead to my soul, for I was on tenterhooks as to how he is regarded who said, "Foxes have their holes and birds of the air have their nests, but the son of man hath not where

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to lay his head." Yes, I am glad, very glad, that Jesus is loved. To merely revere him would be insufficient, but to love him . . .

Also was I impressed with the cordiality of the welcome and open-handed hospitality extended to all who care to attend the Shah Jehan Mosque, irrespective of class, creed, or race. The Sir Salār Jung Memorial House is open to all who care to accept this hospitality—the Brotherhood of Man in active operation. There is no fuss, no ceremony: "take us as you find us" sums up the attitude. The place exudes that much abused phrase, "brotherly love." Here it will be seen in full, powerful, and perfumed bloom. I never miss, if it can possibly be helped, spending every Sunday afternoon and evening there, for I come away very much the debtor.

In conclusion I beg the acceptance by the Editor of my very sincere thanks for giving me the courtesy of his columns and to wish him and all associated with him, with all my heart, the first salutation I learned at the Mosque, "Assalaam 'Alaikum."

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY PREACHES

By SHEIKH MUHAMMAD SIDDIQUE FARUQUE

THE Christians preach that (God forbid) Jesus died on the Cross to save people from their sins and that no one has any chance of salvation unless he believes in that theory. They would be reasonable in what they say if Jesus supported them. But it is quite the opposite of what the holy prophet Jesus preached. A careful study of the Bible will show that, according to it, man can only be saved by believing in the One True God and doing good and not by throwing his sins on the shoulders of someone else.

The idea that original sin has been inherited by all men is an idea that can no longer be tolerated. What should we say with regard to the following case? Suppose a child is born and dies without being baptized. Where is it going, according

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to the Christian theory of human life—to Heaven or to hell? If it goes to hell, then surely God, according to the Christians, is a most cruel Being who sends innocent babes to hell for no fault of theirs. The same is the case with all such people as have never heard the name of Jesus, or rather this peculiar theory of salvation preached by Christians. But the theory seems all the more absurd when we remember that God is the Creator of all human beings and that billions of men and women lived and died before Jesus even came to this world. These men and women had never been told that they were born in sin and were going to die in sin, because the theory of original sin is a recent concoction of the Christian priests. Moses, for instance, never preached this doctrine. The same was the case with all the other prophets before Jesus. The following passages from the Old Testament show clearly that man is to be saved by righteousness and not by vicarious atonement, as promulgated by Christianity.

(1) “ I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee . . . ” (Exod. xx. 2-3).

(2) “ If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering ” (Lev. v. 15).

(3) “ And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity ” (Lev. v. 17).

Quotation (1) given above proves as clearly as any words in any book can ever do that the Old Testament gives the ruling just as does the Holy Qur-án, that there is only One God and that no one is to be worshipped except Himself. The making of images and statues and putting them in churches and all over the sacred and non-sacred places, as is done in

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all the countries of Christendom; and bowing before and paying homage to them, whether they be the images of saints or of the Virgin Mary or of Jesus Christ himself—all these acts are, therefore, evidently against the commandment of God as given in the Old Testament.

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. . . ." The doctrine of the Trinity therefore is entirely flying in the face of the Bible itself. Quotations (2) and (3) given above show that the atonement of sin according to the Old Testament is by means of personal offerings and not by means of a third party taking the sin upon himself for the rest of mankind. Atonement as understood by the Christians was a thing unknown to Jesus Christ and all the prophets who went before him. It is merely a creation of the imagination of the peoples living in the Dark Ages of Europe. It is doubtful whether the early Christians ever had any notion of such a thing as the doctrine of atonement now preached in the churches.¹

¹ The following excerpt will be found informative on our contributor's conclusions.—ED. *I.R.*

" . . . The sacrificial sufferings and deaths of gods on behalf of mankind, let me repeat, were commonplaces of pagan theology; and though the Jews had never thought of the Messiah as one who would have to suffer, they believed that the sufferings of representatives of Israel in atonement for sin were demanded by the Scriptures. Therefore, as soon as the Jewish followers of Jesus Christ came to understand that the ignoble death of their Master was in accord with the Messianic prophecies and had carried into effect the traditional idea of an atoning sacrifice, their belief in His divinity was gloriously confirmed; and, since such an atonement was so well understood by pagans also, the Gentile convert found in it the most convincing factor in the whole argument.

" Now Jesus Himself had never said anything which could be interpreted with certainty as meaning that the forgiveness of original or actual sin and a great reconciliation between God and man were to be the consequences of His death; He had never said that His death was to be regarded as a sacrificial atonement. The words "the Son of Man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45) are evidently a comment of the author of the Gospel, and not the words of Jesus; and even if spoken by Jesus they might only have meant that just as He had lived to bring happiness to others, so He was prepared to die alone for His cause without implicating His followers.

" The words used by Him at the Last Supper are usually supposed to indicate the sacrificial and atoning nature of His death; but this is a misinterpretation. In the Gospels of St. Mark, Jesus says, 'This is

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Christianity as preached and practised at the present day, except by a very few sects, is nothing more than idolatry pure and simple—so much so that the enlightened among the Christians are themselves ashamed of the tenets and practices of their own brethren. It is a question of time only when a second reformation in Christianity will take place to bring down Jesus from his supposed position of the godhead into that of a mere prophet of God, *and it is the duty of us Muslims to hasten this second reformation in Christianity.*

Let us now turn to the New Testament and ponder over the following passages:

“ And he said unto him, why callest thou me good? *there* is none good but one *that is* God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness ” (St. Matt. xix. 17–18).

“ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and

my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many,’ and in St. Luke He says, ‘ This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you ’; and it is only in the much later Gospel of St. Matthew that the words ‘ for the remission of sins ’ are added. ‘ The most conservative critic,’ writes the late Dean of Carlisle, ‘ will have no hesitation in treating this addition as an explanatory gloss by the author of the Gospel ’: and the meaning of the other words may well have been simply that He was about to lay down His life for His friends and to die for the cause.

“ The real and historic Jesus never bothered Himself about the mysteries of theology; His life was one of transparent simplicity, and the basis of His teaching was that God was the loving Father who would pardon sin upon the sole condition of true repentance. He would have been appalled, one may well suppose, at the suggestion that God had not been loving towards men, but had shown implacable anger against them which could only be mollified by the torture and ignoble execution of the Messiah. But St. Paul had a theological mind, and having been convinced by those from whom he had learnt the faith, that Jesus had died to atone sacrificially for men’s wickedness, he developed the idea with enthusiasm.”—*Paganism in our Christianity*, by Arthur Weigall, pp. 160–162. London. 1928.

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in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock " (St. Matt. vii. 21-24).

In the first passage, Jesus denies that he is God, and the only way, according to him, of entering life, i.e. eternal life, is by keeping the commandments which are the same in the Bible as in the Holy Qur-án. So here is a clear refutation of the doctrine of atonement from the mouth of Jesus himself.

The first part of the second passage is a rebuke to those people who called Jesus Lord. He clearly extricates himself from those who work iniquity and declare that the foundation of salvation lies in the doing of good deeds and not in professing to do wonderful deeds in the name of Christ.

Where is, then, the doctrine of atonement and the theory of original sin to be found in the words of Jesus?

In fact, the very opposite is the thing that he preached.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following exchange of letters will be read with interest:

March 18, 1931.

THE EDITOR,
Islamic Review,
The Mosque, Woking.

SIR,—

Our attention has been drawn to a statement in your issue for December 1930. It occurs in the article "Supernaturalism of Al-Qur-án," which criticizes to some degree some of the articles in the new 14th Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The statement is to the effect that "to think that the late Sir T. W. Arnold, author of *The Preaching of Islam*, has sub-

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scribed his name as one of the editors of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is simply disconcerting."

The late Sir T. Arnold not only subscribed his name as one of the editors of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, he was one of the editors, and not only accepted editorial responsibility for the articles "Mohammed," "Qur-ân," and "Islam," he actually wrote the two latter contributions himself. This fact was known to your contributor as long ago as April 1930.

As Sir T. Arnold is now dead we have been unable to refer the points which your contributor raises for his consideration, but we retain our confidence in the authoritative scholarship of our contributor and editor.

Yours faithfully,

THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA CO., LTD.,

W. G. FRANKS,

Manager.

[Reply to the above]

WOKING,

March 21, 1931.

DEAR SIR,—

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th inst., in which you make mention of our criticism of the article on Islam in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The letter, let me admit, does not invite reply from us; nevertheless I feel I should crave your indulgence for drawing your attention to the last paragraph of your letter.

You, perhaps very rightly—could we expect otherwise?—confirm "your confidence in the authoritative scholarship of the late Sir Thomas Arnold." We have no quarrel with you in this matter. We, too, admit the scholarship of the late Sir Thomas Arnold. But what we dispute is his views on matters which concern Islam.

What we do not understand is, why you do not invite and consult those who are better qualified than European Orientalists to write on Islam. Did you invite a Muslim to write on Christianity in your *Encyclopædia*? If not, why did you invite a Christian to write on Islam? The European Orien-

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talists cannot possibly give an unbiased view of Islam, because of the tradition of patristic hatred on which an average European—the scholar not excepted—is nurtured, and we too, like you, retain our confidence in the correctness of our views and in authoritative scholarship of our Muslim savants, and we hope to contradict all such ideas as are given currency even in such a book as yours.

Yours faithfully,

EDITOR,

Islamic Review.

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Wives and Wills.

The February 21st edition of the *Evening News* devoted a whole editorial under the above caption. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, a lady M.P., was to bring before the Parliament "a Bill which lays down the simple proposition that *a husband shall not be permitted to will away the whole of his estate and leave his wife and children in beggary.*" The paper, it is clear, does not like any such restrictions to be imposed on the freedom of a testator. Such a step, according to it, will lead to other and greater evils. As an illustration it says: "*A disgruntled husband, finding that the wife of his bosom, who has made life a burden for him, is going to enjoy his money after she has worried him into his grave, will take care that there is nothing to leave.*"

So here is a tug-of-war between the interests of widows on the one hand and the disgruntled husbands on the other. The tone of the article suggests that the number of such husbands is not very small. Christian Europe is very proud of its Christian ideals of conjugal life and looks down with contempt on the institutions of Islam. Ideals that are mere productions of human imagination cannot, however, interfere with the course of nature. It was regarded by the Christian idealists as a stigma on the Holy Sacrament of marriage to leave in it any room for divorce. The author of the Qur-án,

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however, knew better. The Qur-án also does not look with favour upon the institution of divorce, but it permits it, nevertheless, under certain irremediable circumstances. A law that claims its origin from God must make provision for such cases, however small the number may be. To err is human. In a whole society there must be some mistaken selections and therefore improper matches. In Christianity marriage, once contracted, becomes an indissoluble tie; it is not prepared to take into account such mistaken commitments. But with all the hypocrisies of a false religious pride time must, in the long run, reveal the hard facts of human nature, only rendered hideous by artificial checks. For centuries the Christian peoples were giving a false impression to the world that all was going on well in Christian lands with the sacramental idea of marriage prevailing in society. Course of events, however, come to belie this in all its absurdity. The relations between the sexes have become so much estranged that a law is proposed to be framed to save the wives from the injustice of husbands. Those who are observing the situation a bit closely and are aware of all the different social systems existing in the world will readily see in this proposed legislation, if it actually comes, a clear triumph for Islam. It is Islam alone, of all the living religions, that is extremely anxious to see the woman inherit her husband's property. A specified share is allotted to her in the Qur-án, besides her dower. So Miss Eleanor's Bill claims, on behalf of the wives, only half the rights given to her by Islam. And even this humble claim is resented by powerful organs of the British Christian Society. A situation like this ought to serve as an eye-opener to all those who are duped into believing that women are less respected in Islam than in Christianity. One who has ever cared to look deeply into the attitude of men towards women in Christendom will easily detect the real dishonour and deception hidden behind all the paraphernalia of customary honour shown towards the fair sex. The test-points of honour and love are best furnished by situations where the interests clash, and the introduction of the Bill under discussion is one such point.

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The Disgruntled Husband.

But is there nothing to be said in favour of men who are called "disgruntled husbands" by the editor of the *Evening News*? Certainly such persons do not exist merely in imagination. That their cause has been upheld by a paper of standing is sufficient proof of the fact that their condition is as much worthy of our attention as the condition of deprived wives. So, pressed by the course of events, a class of Christian husbands have come before the world to announce that they are being actually "worried into their grave" by the "wives of their bosom." Poor fellows! finding no remedy for this wrong, either in the Church or in the Church-ridden social system, they take their revenge on these wives while passing away to the other life where they are to partake of the eternal blessings of the life in Christ, in whose name the marriage is declared indissoluble. Amusing indeed! Prejudice dies hard, in spite of all the difficulties and disadvantages that it brings in its train. These people will, in this way, move in a vicious circle, never knowing any end, one evil leading to another, and this one to still another. But still the infallibility of the Church and of current Christianity has to be maintained. Neither will the law compelling husbands to leave a part of their property to their wives, although they may not like to do so, bring any actual remedy in this direction. Other evils of a more serious nature may crop up, as has been hinted at by the editor of the *Evening News*, viz. the husband will take care that there is nothing to leave.

The American Solution.

"In America," we are further told, "they have an excellent rough-and-ready way of dealing with such cases. There, the power of a testator is, in a majority of States, unlimited, but if he does in fact leave his property away from his family in circumstances that affront the conscience of the community a jury promptly finds that he was insane at the time of making the will and it is accordingly declared invalid."

But this is also another form of compulsion. None knows better than the testator himself whether by his will he is trying

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to wreak any vengeance upon the wife. Knowing at the same time how the jury deals with such cases, he may very well adopt safer methods to achieve the end and as a last resort may as well take care that nothing is left to bequeath. An unwilling mind will find a thousand-and-one ways to escape the requirements of the law. It is a pity that, where the natural attraction is so powerful between the parties, law should come in and settle their mutual obligations.

The Real Remedy.

The real remedy lies, evidently, in helping the natural forces to work. The *Daily Herald*, in its issue of March 27, 1931, publishes the views of Mr. John Boyd Carpenter, grandson of the famous Bishop of Ripon, on this point. As we, as Muslims, fully agree with his views on the matter, we cannot do better than quote from him. Says he:

"I am all for lifelong fidelity in marriage, yet I can imagine cases where to couple two persons together for life would be abominable cruelty. There is, for example, the case of the partner in marriage who becomes incurably mad. You say that you cannot understand a man or woman deserting the beloved merely because the one whom you loved has become wounded, either in body or mind. I appreciate the heroism of such an attitude; but I do not think we should *compel people to be as heroic as that*, and the results of trying to do so are apt to be as appalling as most attempts to inculcate virtue by law."

We should only like to add that besides the physical or the mental wound there is, further, the possibility of total absence of love from the beginning. Fancy and bewilderment caused by passion may very well lead to marital bonds. With all possible safeguards, mistakes of this kind are only natural. So, taking all these possibilities into consideration, none but the most unenlightened judgment would insist on the Christian notion of marriage. Could the so-called followers of Jesus only understand that in getting away from this absurd notion they are not breaking away from the religion of God, but rather approaching it!

Attitude of Soviet Russia.

The Soviet Republic is generally credited with bringing

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about surprisingly radical changes in the social conditions of humanity, thus accelerating the advent of a millennium. It will, therefore, be worth while to know what treatments are meted out to women in that land of revolution. The *New India*, in its issue for February 26th, culls from the *Soviet Year Book* for the year 1930 some regulations in connection with marriage and married life in Soviet Russia, parts of which, we believe, will be only too relevant for our purpose.

“Only civil marriage is recognized as legal under Soviet Law.” “In the case of the death of a husband who has not left a will, the inheritance is divided equally among the persons designated in the law. One such person is the widow of the deceased. The husband, however, may provide in his will that the wife be debarred from sharing in the estate.” “A marriage may be dissolved during the lifetime of the parties, either by mutual consent or at the desire of either of them. No grounds for divorce are required.”

It is evident that so far as Soviet law recognizes marriage as a civil contract, it only follows Islam. But as characteristic of laws enacted by man, it commits the crime of extremism when it makes divorce such an easy affair as to require no ground for it. What strikes us as most surprising, however, is the fact of agreement between the irreligious Soviet and the Christian England in their attitude towards the widow. In the opinion of the Soviet Republic also, the husband can so will his property as to deprive his wife of any share in it after his death.

What the Qur-án Prescribes.

As a perfect code of law the Holy Qur-án saw the necessity of permitting divorce in unmendable cases, so as to make conjugal life based on real love instead of false, thus doing away, once for all, with the possibility of a disgruntled husband. It next made the wife entitled to a specified share in her deceased husband's property, over and above the sum fixed as her dowry and other minor concessions (Qur-án, ii. 240, iv. 12). Last of all it appreciated the natural desire of man to make endowments on behalf of institutions and persons not covered by the law of inheritance. So although it allowed the making of bequests, it subjected them to certain conditions.

NOTICE OF BOOKS RECEIVED

"... A bequest that may have been bequeathed . . . *that does not harm*" (i.e. that does not deprive the rightful heirs), announces the Holy Qur-án (iv. 12). Nay, under certain circumstances it deems a bequest as very necessary. And a book with whom the individual lives merely for the benefit of the whole race of humanity could not do otherwise. "Bequest," it says, "is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth [i.e. large property] for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent) upon those who guard (against evil)" (ii. 180).

So the Book wants to keep us between the two extremes. The heirs should not be given too much to enjoy. If the property be a huge one, the rights of the nation or other deserving persons must receive due recognition, with the proviso that natural heirs cannot be debarred from its benefits altogether—for they are connected with the deceased by very sacred and inalienable ties—and the wife is one such heir.

In the face of this remarkable anticipation and marvellous comprehensiveness of a book that owes its origin to an illiterate Arab, is it not necessary that we should desist from boasting too much of our intellectual powers in the matter of framing laws for our social relations?

NOTICE OF BOOKS RECEIVED

From Drury Lane to Mecca. (Sampson Low. London. 1931.)
Pp. 241. 12s. 6d.

THIS is a story of the conversion and pilgrimage of Mr. Hedley Churchward, a British convert to Islam, otherwise known as Haji Mahmoud el Mubarak. The actual author of the story is Mr. Eric Rosenthal. It would have been far more effective, we think, if the book had been written by Mr. Churchward himself. Nevertheless, the trend of it shows without a shadow of doubt that it owes its origin to one who actually belonged to the faith of Islam. It is difficult to understand, however,

who is responsible for the many glaring mistakes of fact with which the volume teems. We may cite one instance: the illustration that faces page 234 has certain lines appended, one of which contains the words—"Where the Prophet's entire kin, including *his wife Fatima . . .*" To say nothing of a cultured Muslim like Mr. Churchward, who would appear to be so familiar with everything concerning Islam and the Muslims, even an average Muslim is sure to know that Fatima was the daughter and not the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Mistakes of this nature, and other less important inaccuracies with reference to the religion and history of Islam, rob the book of much of its potential value. We allow, of course, for the fact that Mr. Churchward did not come in touch with the Revivalists in Islam, as is clear from the account of his life. We, moreover, hold no brief for the present-day Arab people. Their social and religious outlook does not necessarily coincide with that of Islam. Yet it is quite possible that much that is amiss in the book is owing to its vicarious authorship and posthumous publication. Bearing these things in mind, one may read it with advantage, deriving much that is true with regard to Islam and Muslim society, as it was experienced by one who identifies himself with Islam but regards the faith from the European's point of view, with the critical eye of an Englishman.

Says the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

To bid what is reasonable is charity, and forbid what is wrong is charity.

Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and free the captive.

Good thoughts are (parts) of good worship.

There are two favours (of God) which many among men are foolish to ignore—health and leisure.

He who is not thankful to man is not thankful to God.

The signs of a hypocrite are three, although he fasts and prays and thinks that he is a Muslim: when he speaks, he is false; when he promises, he fails; and when he is trusted, he plays false.